



The Weekly Page

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Pages Learn About Legislature



Pages write bills, hold mock hearings

Pages worked individually or in small groups to write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. Criteria for making a legislative solution work was discussed before students selected issues to research and develop. Then they used bill templates on class computers to formulate official-looking documents in preparation for a mock committee hearing on Thursday. Some topics for policy bills included drunk driving, wolves and livestock, and high school sports eligibility. Pages read their bills and "committee members," governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. A "DO PASS" or "DO NOT PASS" recommendation was then voted upon, allowing a bill to continue on in the legislative process. As in the real political system, some bills died in committee.

We are killing our children!



Olympia – Senators Rebecca Garcia Moreno and Ashley McBride introduced Senate Bill 7777 yesterday in the Transportation committee. "This bill addresses the issue of second-hand smoke in vehicles and will protect the

health of our children," said Sen. McBride. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, and 53,800 people die annually from second-hand smoke exposure. Studies show that toxins in a smoker's car are 30 times higher than the level at which an unhealthy air alert is triggered. The new law, if enacted, will prohibit smoking inside motor vehicles when passengers are younger than 18. Violators will be required to pay \$99 and have a permanent cigarette-shaped bumper sticker affixed to their cars.

Big ideas in government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three "big ideas" for a representative government: governing is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day. As they participated in daily discussions, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding around the concepts deepened. On Friday, they wrote about one of the big ideas to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.

Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/PageSchool>

This newsletter has been posted there.

Reps put plastic bags in their place

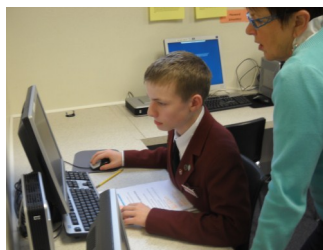


Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Brooklyn Falter introduced House Bill 1111, which addresses the issue of plastic grocery bag pollution. “The bill is a good one because it will improve the environment and save our marine animals,” said Rep. Falter. It takes 300-500 years for a plastic bags to break down, which causes a build up at landfills. Five percent of landfill

mass is plastic bags. The bags also kill thousands of sea turtles and other sea creatures every year when they think the decomposing plastic is food. The new law will charge a 25 cent fee for plastic bags in grocery stores but refund the fee if people recycle the bags back to the stores. Fees will raise money for environmental research and landfill clean up all over the state, according to Rep. Falter.

TTYL on new phone law

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Michael Offe introduced Senate Bill 5693, which addresses the ineffective law regarding texting while driving. “The bill is a good one because it will encourage teens to just put down their cell phones,” said Sen. Offe. Twenty-three percent of all crashes in Washington are caused by texting while behind the wheel of a car. The current fine for this violation is \$124. “This is not enough to dissuade young drivers from the dangerous practice,” said Sen. Offe. This bill will raise the fine to between \$150 to \$260. Fines will pay for TV commercials aimed at teen drivers.



Livestock attacks prompt new bill

Olympia – Senators Haley McIrvin and Emily Owens introduced Senate Bill 6543 yesterday in committee. “This bill addresses the issue of wolves hurting livestock and will help the ranchers protect not only their animals but their profit as well,” said Sen. McIrvin. Under the terms of this bill, ranchers and farmers who have confirmed kills of their livestock by grey



wolves can apply for a tag to kill two of the animals in that year. Ranchers must shoot them rather than luring them with bait or trapping them.

New requirements for hunters and hikers proposed



Olympia – Senate Bill 6666 was introduced yesterday by Senators Carmen Swannack and Lacey Rice. “This bill addresses the issue of inexperienced hunters and will prevent serious hunting accidents,” said Sen. Swannack.

In Washington state there is no minimum age for hunting without adult supervision. Many young and inexperienced hunters are going out alone to hunt. A 14-year-old hunter shot and killed a hiker only 120 yards away from him in 2008, thinking she was a bear. If this bill becomes law, the age at which one may obtain a hunting license for large game without adult supervision will be 14, and for small game the age will be 10. Fines for violators will be \$150 for first offenses and \$250 for second offenses. “This bill will keep public lands safe and help make sure that both hunters and hikers have a good experience not marred by a serious accident,” said Sen. Rice.

While adults smoke, kids choke!

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Sam Kallstrom and Joseph Lawrence introduced Senate Bill 7162, which addresses the issue of secondhand smoking in vehicles while minors are present.



“The bill is a good one because it will promote the health of our young children,” said Sen. Kallstrom. Secondhand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals known to be toxic or cancer-causing. “Young passengers in cars really have no voice in this matter. They can’t really tell their parents or other adults to put out their cigarettes, so they cannot escape the second-hand smoke,” said Sen. Lawrence. If this bill becomes law, smoking in vehicles while minors are present will be prohibited. “This will be a secondary law for three years so people can get use to it before it will become a primary law,” said Sen. Lawrence. Violators will receive a fine of \$50 while the law is secondary, and when it becomes a primary law, the fine will go up to \$120.

Unfair eligibility issue tackled



Olympia—Senators Mitch Grant, Taylor Swanson, and Zach Harris introduced Senate Bill 5001 yesterday in the Early Learning & K-12 Education committee. “This bill is a

good one because it will create a more fair standard for athletes in our public high schools,” said Sen. Grant. Currently, the Washington Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) sets minimum requirements for all high school sports which include having some failing grades, but school districts can mandate higher standards for their teams. This is where the unfair advantage comes in, according to the lawmakers. Great players with poor grades in one school district may be held out of games until their grades improve while great players with poor grades in other school districts are allowed to play. This bill will require a minimum GPA of 2.0 and passing grades in all classes. “Most colleges have a 2.0 GPA requirement. Allowing athletes to play when they’re just barely making the grade academically sets them up for failure beyond high school,” said Sen. Harris.

More families qualify for free health insurance

Olympia – House Bill 1996 was introduced yesterday by Representative Joseph Koch. “This bill addresses the issue of uninsured children and will ensure that families that live in poverty are receiving the care that they need for their children,” said Sen. Joseph Koch. In 2006, there were more than 73,000 uninsured children in Washington. Currently, Washington State's Apple Health Program covers the basic health care needs of approximately 40,000 children. “If this program gets cut, then all these children will be dropped. We have so many more people out of work whose families can’t afford medical insurance. It is so much more expensive to take care of a child who shows up in an emergency room than it is to treat him at a family doctor,” said Rep. Koch. To ensure that more children living in poverty will be covered under the Apple Health Program, the legislature will amend the current qualifying guidelines. Families will now



qualify for free health insurance if they make up to \$345 more per month than previous limits. “Our children are our future and we want them to grow up to be healthy citizens,” he said.

Senator wants more speedy executions

Olympia—Senator Clint Timmermans introduced Senate Bill 7998 yesterday in the Judiciary committee. The issue was the high cost of the death penalty, and Senator Timmermans proposed cutting the amount of time from sentencing to execution. Currently there are seven people on death row in Washington State. One, Jonathan Lee Gentry has been housed there since 1991. “That’s 21 years that the state has been taking care of a murderer—giving him food, round-the-clock guarding, medical attention and paying for his many court costs,” said Sen. Timmermans. If the bill becomes law, the state will be required to finish all appeals and execute the convicted inmate within three years. “With the extra money we save, we can use it to help much more deserving citizens,” he said.



Safer drivers, safer roads



Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Lauren King introduced Senate Bill 5337, which addresses the issue of elderly drivers. “The bill is a good one because it will create safer roads,” said Sen. King. Accident rates in

the U.S. among drivers 65 and older are higher than for any group other than teens; from 1990 to 1997 the number of deaths involving elderly drivers shot up 14 percent. With seniors the nation's fastest growing demographic, the rates will grow higher, according to the lawmaker. This bill will require all drivers to renew their driver's licenses in person every fifteen years and take a driver's test as well as have a brief check-up. This will insure that not only will the roads be safer from potentially dangerous elderly drivers, but also from the potentially dangerous younger drivers who will be removed from the roads for a time. All will have a chance to receive their license again.

Watch us live at TVW.org

Bigger isn't always better

Olympia – House Bill 1234 was introduced yesterday by Senators Brandon Grandy and Dakota Hunt. “This bill addresses the issue of childhood obesity and will improve the health of our children,” said Sen. Hunt. In 2004, an estimated 17 percent of children and adolescents ages 2-19 were overweight, a rate that has more than tripled since 1980. In Washington State \$1,591 million per year is spent on obesity-related health conditions. With the projected increase in obesity, this will increase to \$7,230 million in 2018, or about \$1,333 per adult. If this bill becomes law, the State will require all public middle and high schools to increase the fitness standards and intensity levels of physical education activities. In grades 1-8, two lessons per week will be allocated for educating students about healthy eating and recreation and the risks and dangers of obesity. “By 2018, this could save the state over \$4 million,” said Sen. Grandy.



High school sports eligibility to change



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Ian Van Dusen and McKenzie Mathews introduced Senate Bill 6996, which addresses the issue of high school sports eligibility. “The bill is a good one be-

cause it will eliminate unfair advantages for some teams,” said Sen. Van Dusen. Currently, according to WIAA requirements, students can be failing one of their classes and the remaining classes only need passing grades for the player to be eligible for the team. “School districts can set higher standards for their players, though, and that is where the inequality comes in,” said Sen. Mathews. This bill will stop the unfair advantage in sports by requiring all schools to stick with the 2.0 GPA standard; no higher or lower standards will be allowed. No one will be able to fail a class and continue to play on the team, according to the senators. All schools will have to follow the high standard that Washington will expect. “This will also set a good example for student athletes who aspire to play in college, too,” said Sen. Van Dusen.

Lawmakers decide how to give teens more sleep

Olympia – House Bill 1518 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Prabjot Virk and Logan Cooper. “This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprived teens and will improve the academic success of our high school students,” said Rep. Virk. Many teenagers are sleep deprived, which can cause health problems and interfere with learning. Sixty percent of children under the age of 18 complain of being tired during the school day, according to their parents, and 15 percent said they fell asleep at school during the year. Health experts agree that teens should get at least 9 hours of sleep every night, but because of biological changes regulating the sleep/wake patterns of most teens, they can't fall asleep until 11 or 12 at night. “The early school start times of our high schools are in direct conflict with these



body rhythms,” said Rep. Cooper. This bill requires public high schools to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. “This will result in students being more alert and awake during school hours and throughout the day,” said Rep. Prabjot.

Hey, my car won't start!

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Parker Dean and Maria Garza introduced Senate Bill 6969, which addresses the issue of drunk driving. “The bill is a good one because it will limit alcohol related accidents in Washington,” said Sen. Dean. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) reports that the average person convicted of drunk driving has driven under the influence of alcohol at least 80 times before arrested. “Alcohol continues to be a problem in our state. In 2009 there were 492 traffic fatalities in Washington, and 232 of them were alcohol-related,” said Sen. Garza. This legislation will require all DUI offenders to install an Ignition Interlock Device (IID) in their cars. “The device is installed on a vehicle's dashboard and works like a breathalyzer; you breathe into the device and it measures your Blood Alcohol Content (BAC). If alcohol is detected, the car won't start,” said Sen. Dean. According to the lawmakers, in states that have this requirement, second offenses for DUIs are cut in half.



Cell phone change will be more fair to experienced drivers



Olympia – Senate Bill 7997 was introduced yesterday by Senator Gavin Hobbs. “This bill addresses the issue of the current cell phone law and will be more fair to experienced drivers,” said Sen. Hobbs. Currently, every driver except intermediate drivers are allowed to use hands-free

cell phones while driving. However, between 2004 and 2008, young drivers age 16-25 made up 15 percent of all licensed drivers in the state of Washington but were involved in 38 percent of fatal and serious injury collisions. “This clearly shows that even older drivers lack the driving experience that can contribute to critical misjudgment if they become distracted,” he said. If this bill becomes law, the age of prohibiting any mobile phone use while driving will be raised to 25. Drivers over 25 have better judgment and fewer accidents and should be able to talk/use their cell phones, even hand-held ones, according to the senator.

Ignition interlock installation required for DUI offenders

Olympia – House Bill 1012 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Jackie Kremer, Micalie Hunt, and Katie Boesenberg. “This bill addresses the issue of drunk drivers and will reduce the risk of accidents due to irresponsible repeat offenders,” said Rep. Hunt. In 2008, studies show that there were 11,733 deaths in the United States due to drunk driving. In Washington State 216 automobile fatalities and 34 children who were walking or on bikes were killed by drunk drivers in that same year. This bill will require an ignition interlock device (IID) to be installed in the car of anyone convicted of a DUI. The cost of the device will be added onto the fine that the offender already pays. “If we don’t act now, our citizens will be at a higher

risk when they get into a car of their own,” said Rep. Boesenberg.



Second-hand smoke in cars no longer a problem



Olympia – Senate Bill 5252 was introduced yesterday by Senators Austin Matloff, Caroline Mull, and Scott Nichols. “This bill addresses the issue of second-hand smoke in automobiles and will improve the health of children who live with smokers,” said Sen. Mull.

According to the CDC, an estimated 45.3 million people smoke cigarettes in the United States. There are over 250 toxins in smoke which are known to cause cancer and other respiratory diseases. “Children riding in cars where smoking is going on are trapped and often too young to stand up for themselves,” said Sen. Matloff. The bill will ban smoking in cars with young passengers and carries a fine of \$215. The money from the fines will be divided among cancer treatment centers, anti-smoking ads and rehab centers for people who are trying to quit smoking, according to the senators.

Bottle bill helps the environment

Olympia – House Bill 1995 was introduced yesterday by Representative Logan Weatherbee in the Environment committee. “This bill addresses the issue of beverage bottle pollution and will reduce waste in our state’s landfills,” said



Rep. Weatherbee. Beverage bottles make up 40-60 percent of litter found on highways and public parks. Up to 63.4 billion plastic bottles are dumped into landfills yearly. “They take 300-500 years to decompose,” he said. This bill calls for adding 10 cents to the cost of all beverages sold in recyclable plastic bottles. The cost will be refunded when the consumer returns the bottle to the retailer or specified recycling centers.

Competitive edge results in *Jeopardy* win

On Friday pages tested their knowledge of the Legislative process in a spirited game of *Jeopardy*. Winning teams were awarded certificates and brightly colored stickers that they wore proudly for the rest of the day.

New school hours will promote better academics



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Marissa Purcell and Michael Layman introduced House Bill 1026, which addresses the issue of sleep deprived teenagers and their academic struggles. “The bill is a good one because it will

improve the school success and health of our students,” said Rep. Layman. Many teenagers are sleep deprived, which can cause health problems and interfere with learning. Studies show that sleep deprived teenagers get poor grades, have more mental and physical health problems, and are not safe drivers. “A teen’s biological clocks is programmed to stay up later and get up later. Schools that start too early interfere with this normal body function,” said Rep. Purcell. Eighty-five percent of teenagers say they feel tired as school, and 15 percent say they fall asleep during class. This bill will require all public high schools to move start times to late in the day and make sleep a topic in science and health classes.

Medical marijuana easier to get

Olympia – House Bill 1998 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Lauren Granroth, Selena Walsh-Smith, and Nikki Church. “This bill addresses the difficulty of obtaining medical marijuana and will establish a licensing system for dispensaries,” said Rep. Church. Last year, with the veto by the Governor to regulate dispensaries, many of the stores were shut down, making it even more difficult for patients to get their prescribed drugs. This bill will allow cities to decide whether they want to license dispensaries. “This will remove the liability from the state, which is why the Governor vetoed the bill last year,” said Rep. Granroth. Cities with 20,000 will be allowed one dispensary; cities with 40,000 will be able to have two. “Some patients who live in smaller communities may have

to travel to a larger city to get their medicine, but at least it will be available,” said Rep. Walsh-Smith.



Kids being forced to smoke

Olympia – Senate Bill 6363 was introduced yesterday by Senators Samantha Lunderville and Natasha Helpenstell. “This bill addresses the issue of second-hand smoke in cars and will reduce the



number of youths inhaling toxins when they ride with smokers,” said Sen. Helpenstell. Kids are being forced to breathe the second-hand smoke and they don’t really have any say in the matter, according to the senators. Air pollution in smokers’ cars can reach levels nearly 10 times the hazardous levels set by the EPA. Children are susceptible to respiratory diseases and other health conditions when they have to breathe the toxins in the confining space of a car. To improve the health of children, the legislature proposes to ban smoking in a car when there are passengers younger than 18. For the first six months, the law will be a secondary one. After that, it will become a primary law, carrying a \$110 fine for any violations.

Lawmaker mandates healthier schools



Olympia – Senate Bill 6624 was introduced yesterday by Senator Catherine Thatcher. “This bill addresses the issue of childhood obesity and will require healthier lunches, more physical education, and more food- and exercise-focused health classes,” said Sen. Thatcher.

This bill will require at least four hours of physical education a week and one health class focusing on food and exercise every year. The legislation also will require schools to serve healthier food and use healthier ingredients for children to choose from. Childhood obesity is becoming an increasing problem, with over 17 percent of children aged 2-19 being overweight, according to the senator. “This will help prevent childhood obesity which can lead to adult medical problems like type two diabetes, stroke, and heart problems,” she said.

Plastic bags have no future

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Marguerite Henderson, Julia Yoon and Hailey Allen introduced Senate Bill 7083, which address-



es the issue of plastic retail/grocery bags. “The bill is a good one because it will preserve our wildlife and environment,” said Sen. Yoon. Plastic bags cause increasing pollution problems. Since their use began in the early 1980s, environmental groups estimate that 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags are being used worldwide every year, and almost none of them are being disposed of correctly. “Not only is foreign oil used to create the bags, but once used and disposed of, they take hundreds of years to decompose,” said Sen. Henderson. As the petroleum-based plastic breaks down into tiny particles, they contaminate the soil and waterways, entering the food chain when animals accidentally ingest them. This bill recommends banning the production, distribution and sale of plastic bags in Washington State. Stores continuing to offer the bags will face a \$500 per week fine.

Reps introduce solution to welfare fraud

Olympia – House Bill 2500 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Danielle Kobelin and Lila Balakrishnan. “This bill addresses the issue of EBT card fraud and will save the state money,” said Rep. Balakrishnan. A recent investigation found that an average of 27,000 Electronic Benefit Transaction cards were being replaced each month, with many people asking for replacements three or more times. Cards are being used to purchase drugs and are being used in local casinos. In 2010, 13,000 welfare recipients withdrew an estimated \$2 million in cash from casino ATM machines. House Bill 2500 introduces new requirements to receive cards and requires picture identification on all EBT cards. “Washington would save millions of dollars by ratifying this bill,” said Rep. Kobelin.



Guest speakers visit Page School

Steve Lindstrom, contract lobbyist; Becca Kenna-Schenk, caucus staff for the Senate Democrats; Secretary of State Sam Reed; and Randy Dorn, Superintendent of Public Instruction, joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. Each spoke about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information in regard to their contribution to state government. Pages were able to interact with the guests, asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speakers' questions.



Page program over 100 years old

The Legislative page program has been in existence since 1891. This photo is of pages who served in past years. The first female page served in 1937. In the past, pages were required to do ironing and cleaning for members. Page duties today are much more professional and include delivering campus correspondence, helping with mailings in legislative offices, and handing out documents on the floor of the Senate and House. Thanks for a great week!